

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3130

UNCLAS BUDAPEST 1196

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION BUCHAREST INFO VIENNA 25 APRIL REPEATED
FOR YOUR INFO

QUOTE

UNCLAS BUDAPEST 1196

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CGEN, CVIS, HU

SUBJ: HUNGARIAN TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

REF: BUCHAREST 1774 (NOTAL)

1. VIENNA: REFTEL ADVISES THAT HUNGARIAN TRAVEL OFFICE IN VIENNA RECENTLY INFORMED TWO USCITS TRANSITING HUNGARY VIA SURFACE TO ROMANIA THAT TRAVELER MUST NOW HAVE VISA TO COUNTRY OF DESTINATION (IN THIS CASE ROMANIA) BEFORE BEING ISSUED HUNGARIAN TRANSIT VISA. REFTEL SEEKS CLARIFICATION.

2. EMBASSY QUERY TO MFA VISA SECTION DREW RESPONSE THAT "IN ACCORDANCE INTERNATIONAL CUSTOM" HUNGARIAN AUTHORITIES DO REQUIRE THAT AN APPLICANT FOR HUNGARIAN TRANSIT VISA ALREADY HAVE VISA TO COUNTRY OF DESTINATION IF THAT COUNTRY REQUIRES A VISA FOR ENTRY.

3. AS BUCHAREST INDICATES, HUNGARIAN AUTHORITIES IN PAST HAVE NOT ALWAYS ADHERED TO THIS REGULATION VIS
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A VIS ROMANIA AT LEAST, PRESUMABLY SINCE IT

KNOWN THAT ROMANIANS ISSUE VISA AT BORDER AND ENTRY
GENERALLY ASSURED. WE SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT
HUNGARIANS MAY NOW HAVE INSTITUTED MORE RESTRICTIVE
POLICY BECAUSE OF PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM NOVEMBER
1974 ROMANIAN IMPLEMENTATION OF DAILY CURRENCY EXCHANGE
REQUIREMENT FOR VISA APPLICANTS. WE KNOW OF AT LEAST
ONE RECENT CASE IN WHICH AN AMERICAN WAS GIVEN HUN-
GARIAN TRANSIT VISA BUT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY REFUSED ROMA-
NIAN VISA AT ROMANIAN BORDER BECAUSE HE DID NOT HAVE
SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO PURCHASE THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF
ROMANIAN CURRENCY. HUNGARIANS WOULD NOT ALLOW HIM
RETURN TO AUSTRIA ON TRANSIT VISA AND INDIVIDUAL DID
NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO PAY ADDITIONAL COST OF
TOURIST VISA. (WE EVENTUALLY HAD TO REPATRIATE HIM
TO U.S.) THERE HAVE ALSO REPORTEDLY BEEN CASES IN
WHICH WESTERN TOURISTS HAVE APPLIED FOR CHEAPER
TRANSIT VISA WITH NO INTENTION OF ACTUALLY TRANSITING,
AND HAVE THEN SOUGHT TO RETURN DIRECTLY TO AUSTRIA.
TO EXTENT THIS HAS BEEN A PROBLEM, HUNGARIANS MAY HAVE
WEARIED OF IT.

4. REGARDLESS OF HUNGARIANS' RATIONALE, AND ALTHOUGH
THEY MAY LAPSE OCCASIONALLY, IT APPEARS THEY RESERVE RIGHT
TO DEMAND THAT TRANSIT VISA APPLICANT PRODUCE VISA TO
DESTINATION, AND RECOMMEND TRAVELERS BE SO ADVISE.

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